



**Regeringen**

**Annex to Government decision of  
20 December 2023**

UD2023/18067

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs**

## **Strategy for democracy support through Swedish party- affiliated organisations 2024–2027**

## 1. Basic premises and added value

Human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are priority areas within Swedish global development assistance and areas where Swedish development assistance provides clear added value. Sweden has extensive experience contributing to strengthening the development of democratic forms of government, including well-functioning multiparty systems and free and fair elections. Swedish parties and party-affiliated organisations (PAO) have been part of this work for more than two decades. Through PAOs, Swedish parties share experience, cooperate with, and contribute support to political parties and other actors in partner countries to achieve strategic objectives. Swedish parties provide important added value, particularly in contexts where there is a need to establish or strengthen political resilience to the influence of authoritarian states. Well-functioning democracy and mature party systems in developing countries are pertinent to enable implementation of Swedish development assistance within a large number of other strategies. There are also obvious synergies with Swedish interests within broader foreign policy.

## 2. Direction

The objective of Sweden's international development assistance is to create preconditions for better living conditions for people living in poverty and under oppression. Promoting democracy is an important part of Swedish development assistance. A well-functioning party system is a prerequisite for democracy. The purpose of party-affiliated development assistance is to aid in the development of well-functioning party systems in developing countries through contributions from Swedish PAOs, with the aim of promoting representative democratic systems of government in those countries.

The activities will help strengthen the impact of Swedish development assistance policy priorities in line with Development assistance for a new era – freedom, empowerment, and sustainable growth (Reg. no 2023/17726).

The Strategy will apply in 2024–2027 and covers the funds allocated for this purpose in the appropriation directions of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for each budget year. Contributions within the framework of this strategy will be funded in line with the conditions for appropriation 1:1 Development Cooperation, appropriation item 13 in the appropriation directions for Sida for each budget year.

Financial support that is channelled to PAOs should be transparent, results-oriented, and effective, in line with any other development assistance. This support is intended for the parties in the Riksdag with an established PAO and will consist of three parts during the strategy period.

- **Part one** is support allocated in a way that reflects the allocation of seats in the Riksdag. It goes to PAOs that present Sida with an activity plan and budget whose content is in line with the strategy's objectives.
- **Part two** is a basic contribution that is the same amount for each PAO receiving support. This basic contribution will total SEK 2 million per year per PAO receiving support in line with part one or three.
- **Part three** is support consisting of already agreed contributions in line with the earlier Strategy for democracy support through Swedish party-affiliated organisations 2023–2027. The already concluded one-year agreements will be extended until 31 December 2027 according to the conditions that applied when they were signed.

The activities governed by this strategy should contribute to strengthening and supporting the development of democratic political parties, democratic movements, change agents, or organised democracy defenders that have an agenda and may develop into political parties. The PAOs themselves determine which countries they work in. In exceptional cases, contributions can be made to cooperation partners/actors in countries in the EU neighbourhood that are not receiving assistance in accordance with the OECD DAC when the aim is to contribute to peaceful and democratic development in the EU's eastern neighbourhood. In addition, work with actors in exile from their countries of origin may be supported.

The part of the activities allocated to PAOs in line with the allocation of seats in the Riksdag (part one) should:

- Contribute to democratic, inclusive, and well-functioning political parties, democratic movements, and change actors
- The activities should also contribute to the promotion of organised defenders of democracy that have an agenda and can develop into political parties, and cooperation within platforms and networks for political dialogue

- Contribute to increased representation, participation, and influence in political organisations for underrepresented groups, including women and young persons

### **3. Context**

Respect for human rights is a fundamental prerequisite for people to be able to enjoy a life in freedom. They are key to upholding democracy and the rule of law. Democracy and respect for human rights, gender equality and the rule of law are goals in and of themselves, but also means of achieving other goals.

Global democratic backsliding has entailed growing restrictions on the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms. For many countries, respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are no longer self-evident goals. They are being challenged by more authoritarian social models and political ideas.

Support for the development of democratic systems of government is a key part of Swedish development assistance and is based on the conviction that democracy provides the best opportunities for people living in poverty and under oppression to improve their living conditions and defend their human rights. For a democracy to function and guarantee opportunities for responsibility, accountability, and representative government, a well-functioning multiparty system and free and fair elections are required.

Support to parties and party systems touches on a country's political core. The existence of repressive legislation and administrative obstacles that make it more difficult for civil society and opposition parties to operate freely contributes to increased risks, which necessitate particular diligence when managing them.

### **3. Activities**

The PAOs are responsible for the framing, contents, and monitoring of activities. Sida will also follow up and monitor the activities that is carried out. Their annual strategy report will be comprehensive and include a report, analysis, and assessment of the performance of the activities in relation to the stated objectives. Performance information will be used as a basis for decision-making, learning and accountability, and for ensuring transparency towards the general public. Internationally agreed principles on aid and

development effectiveness will be applied. This includes anti-corruption and risk management principles.

Sweden's development assistance should be relevant, with a focus on a long-term perspective, transparency, and effectiveness. Quality and clear reporting of results are key. Citizens have the right to transparency and should be able to be assured that the tax revenues used for development assistance are making a difference.

PAO cooperation partners must have charters, party programmes, policies (or equivalent) and/or activities that match the strategy's objectives with the aim of democratic development, increased respect for human rights, and equal opportunities for all, in accordance with the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights and associated international conventions. Only democratic parties and organisations that push for a political agenda with non-violent methods can participate in a cooperation partnership with a PAO. Political parties or organisations that have armed wings cannot participate in a cooperation partnership with a PAO. Cooperation partners should work with democratic methods and goals. The activities will preferably be aimed at the long-term strengthening of PAO cooperation partners in their capacity to contribute to the strategy's aims.

Programme contributions related to elections will be pursued cautiously and will not include direct financing of cooperation partner election campaigns. Funding of PAO's own contribution when receiving support from the European Commission are permitted within the framework of the strategy. Exchanges, teaching, and observation in connection with elections can be carried out in collaboration with other actors. Synergies can be sought with activities within the framework of other strategies, particularly Sweden's strategy for global development cooperation for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

Funds must not be used for Swedish parties' regular activities in Sweden or internationally. Only the basic contribution may be used for information and communications activities in Sweden.

To be able to apply for support within this strategy, the party with which the PAO is affiliated must be represented in the Riksdag. In addition, the PAO should have a charter and ongoing or planned activities in line with the strategy's aim and objectives. In the event that a party divides, ceases or loses

its entire parliamentary mandate, the organisation has the right to continue approved activities during subsequent years with support equivalent to 50 per cent (of the total support including the basic contribution) the first year, 25 per cent the second year and 50 per cent of the basic contribution the third year (to enable final reporting), after which the support is ultimately discontinued.

Sida and PAOs should keep relevant Swedish missions abroad informed about the activities within the framework of this strategy. Sida will report overall results in connection with the annual strategy report and via Openaid. PAOs are responsible for providing information to the missions abroad in the specific country context and in connection with a specific contribution. Moreover, they should assist the mission abroad in an equivalent way to that of other Swedish development assistance activities where relevant. It is important that it remains clear that it is the PAOs that are responsible for implementation of the support. There must be a clear delineation between PAO activities and Sweden's relations with the recipient country.

Sida will provide clear justifications of its decisions. This is done to ensure parliamentary and public scrutiny. Decisions that are not classified will be published on Openaid.

#### **Activities for the support based on allocation of seats, and the basic contribution**

For part one of the activities, the support is distributed to PAOs based on the allocation of seats in the Riksdag in the most recent elections.

The PAO support based on the number of seats must be aimed at strengthening democratic political parties in the partner country and other movements, change agents, or organised democracy defenders that have an agenda and may develop into political parties, and cooperation within platforms and networks for political dialogue. The emphasis should be on strengthening capacity, organisation, and institution development through support to education and exchange programmes, and the parties' ability to take part in international party activities, particularly within the EU.

Cooperation may take place in collaboration with other organisations within the scope of the support, and/or with several parties in a region within the scope of a programme or similar scheme. Support in the form of material

gifts and money or funding of activities directly related to elections is not permitted. Transparency should permeate the activity as far as possible.

The contribution distributed based on the allocation of seats and part two, the basic contribution, go to PAOs (one per political party represented in the Riksdag) that present Sida with an annual operational plan and budget that describe the direction of the activities and the choice of cooperation partners in line with activities as outlined above.

### **Activities for support that is not distributed based on the allocation of seats (part three)**

Part three of the activities consists of already agreed contributions in line with the Strategy for democracy support through Swedish party-affiliated organisations 2023–2027, which took effect on 1 January 2023. Decisions on extending those agreements for the period 2024–2027 are made in accordance with Sida regulations.

### **Reporting requirements**

Reporting and audits take place in a combined manner for all parts of the support that a PAO receives.

PAOs must present Sida with an annual narrative report and financial report examined by an independent authorised auditor. Administrative costs in Sweden should be accounted for separately.

Follow-up and monitoring to ensure that PAO activities take place in line with the strategy are Sida's responsibility. This is regulated in the agreements Sida concludes with the PAOs.

If necessary, PAOs can seek assistance and guidance from Sida to ensure that the activities and reporting meet requirements concerning internal governance, control, budget planning, and follow-up, etc.

If the support is used incorrectly, PAOs will be obliged to repayment.

Sida's monitoring of the activities should produce reliable and useful performance information for both the short and long term through qualitative and quantitative information, where possible. Performance monitoring should indicate whether the activities have made a difference, how, for whom and to what extent, based on existing conditions.

An overarching strategic dialogue on implementation of the strategy will take place as necessary between Sida, PAOs and the Government Offices (Ministry for Foreign Affairs), where the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is convener. If necessary, the Government Offices (Ministry for Foreign Affairs) can summon Sida for additional consultation on the activities.